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ABSTRACT

This program explores the dangers of landmines as "weapons of mass destruction in slow motion." These hidden killers have been called the "perfect soldier"--never sleeping and never missing--yet kill thousands of people each year, many innocent civilians. The study guide offers questions to use before viewing the video, questions to follow the video, classroom activities to focus student thinking on the problem, topics for further research, and a list of seven resources. (EH)

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AMERICA'S DEFENSE MONITOR

Educational TV for the Classroom

STUDY GUIDE FOR

KILLING FIELDS: THE DEADLY LEGACY OF LANDMINES

#738

SO 025 641

Produced by the Center for Defense Information

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KILLING FIELDS:
THE DEADLY LEGACY OF LANDMINES

This video, "Killing Fields: The Deadly Legacy of Landmines," explores the dangers of these weapons which have been called "weapons of mass destruction in slow motion." Over a hundred million landmines are scattered around the world, killing and maiming thousands of people each year. Most of the victims are innocent civilians.

This film can enhance a unit on humanitarian issues, arms sales, governmental policies, or military history. Some images shown reflect the grim realities of the problems caused by landmines and therefore can be disturbing; viewer discretion is advised.

Landmines have killed or maimed more people than have been killed by nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons combined. These hidden killers have been called the "perfect soldier" - never sleeping and never missing. Where problems lie is that they continue to fight like soldiers long after the battle is actually over. The International Committee of the Red Cross has found that landmines kill or injure more than 1200 people a month worldwide; most of them are unarmed citizens. Unlike other weapons, many are designed to maim instead of kill, making their victims into a burden for the society in which they live.

This compelling analysis features:

Senator PATRICK LEAHY
Democrat-Vermont
STEVE GOOSE
Human Rights Watch Arms Project
JODY WILLIAMS
Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation
Col. RICHARD JOHNSON, USA, (Ret.)
Former Head of the Mines, Countermine, and Demolitions, Directorate at Picatinny Arsenal
Lt. Col. BURRUS CARNAHAN, USAF, (Ret.)
Landmine Protocol Working Group

BEFORE VIEWING QUESTIONS

1) What are landmines? Where have they been used? Why would they be valuable to use in a battle?

2) What could the long-term effects of landmines be?

3) Do you think combattants should keep in mind the post-war situation when choosing military strategies?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1) How are landmines used during combat? Why do forces decide to use them?

2) What are the medical, economic, environmental and social impacts of landmines?

3) What problems do landmines pose to noncombatants?

4) How are mines different from other weapons?

5) Do you think combattants have a responsibility to think about the post-battle situation? Should they keep this in mind when making decisions about the necessary techniques? Can these weapons be used responsibly?

6) How have new technologies affected the use and effects of landmines? How has the use of landmines changed over time? What does the future hold with regard to landmines?

7) How could the international community work to lessen the negative impact of landmines? What policies could be implemented to decrease landmine use?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY:
Discuss the moratorium issue in Congress

Have the class split up in three groups. One group will represent officials in favor of a moratorium; the second one will be against and the third will be members of Congress. Tell students that Congress is making decisions on landmine policy and spokesmen of each side have been asked to present their views.
Have each group meet together to discuss the issue. The first two groups should brainstorm reasons and arguments for their side. They can write these ideas down in a position paper, which they must then present to the class. The "congressmen" must brainstorm a list of potential policies and discuss the pros and cons of each possibility.

They then must present these ideas to the class after the other two presentations, leading to a debate involving all class members about the issue. The discussion should include not only a debate about the use and dangers of landmines, but also about possible legislation. After discussion, Congress should take a vote on the proposed policies. Students then could write reaction papers, stating their opinion on the decisions that were made.

TOPICS FOR ESSAYS OR FURTHER RESEARCH

1) Talking about the existence of land mines in a battle area, Jody Williams of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation stated, "*It obviously has to have a long-term impact on the rebuilding of a society in the post-conflict setting.*"
What are some examples of long-term impact? Do you think these effects are indeed "obvious"? Why do combattants at the time ignore them to place these landmines?

2) "*If landmines are used responsibly; if they are laid on an area of land that is itself a military objective if there are military forces around that know where those mines are and can warn civilians away if the location of the minefield is marked so that they can be cleared later after the conflict is over - then I don't think that the use of landmines violates any exisitng rule of war.*" - Lt. Col. Burrus Carnahan USAF, (Ret.), Landmine Protocol Working Group
Discuss this comment. How realistic is it to expect that landmines will be used "responsibly"?

3) Research the existing international laws regarding the use of landmines. How effective is international law in reducing harm to civilians from mine warfare? In particular, have students explore the Landmine Protocol and the Landmine Moratorium Act.

RESOURCES

Rudolph Chelminski, "The New Killing Fields," **Reader's Digest**, March 1994.

Kevin P. Clements, "Limiting the Production and Spread of Landmines," **Pacific Research**, February 1994.

Col. Richard H. Johnson (USA-Ret.), "The Lethal Legacy of Landmines," **Army**, January 1994.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, "Landmine Moratorium: A Strategy for Stronger International Limits," **Arms Control Today**, January/February 1993.

John Ryle, "The Invisible Enemy," **New Yorker**, November, 29, 1993.

Donovan Webster, "It's The Little Bombs That Kill You," **New York Times Magazine**, January 23, 1994.

Jim Wurst, "Ten Million Tragedies, One Step At A Time," **Bulletin of Atomic Scientists**, July/August 1993.

Organizations

Human Rights Watch: the Arms Project
1522 K Str., N.W., Suite 910
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(202) 371-6592

Physicians for Human Rights
100 Boylston Str., Suite 702
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 695-0041

AMERICA'S DEFENSE MONITOR: THE PERFECT WAY TO BRING ISSUES TO LIFE IN THE CLASSROOM

America's Defense Monitor offers an in-depth look at our nation's military and security-related policies which can be very useful in the high school or college classroom. Episodes can be used either to supplement normal classroom material or to introduce completely new issues or points of view to students. The award-winning series is perfect for these uses since each episode presents critical information in a lively, entertaining format which will easily arouse students' interest. Topics range from the social costs of military spending to nuclear proliferation, the arms trade, and the impact of the military on society, the media and the environment. Each half-hour videotape features interviews with key policy makers.

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